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ABSTRACT

Defining creative drama as a teaching process that uses the inherent ability of each person to explore ideas, behavior patterns, and human relationships, this monograph is designed to help teachers create a working environment within which this process can be most productive. Various sections of the monograph provide information about how creative drama can best be used in the classroom; the three divisions of creative drama--predrama, fantasy drama, and human drama; the teacher's role in creating an environment in which students can work openly and harmoniously; activities for predrama, fantasy drama, and human drama; the objectives of creative drama; and lesson structure and sample lessons. Lists of selected basic resource texts, other sources of information about the subject, professional organizations, workshops and festivals, and available videotapes are also presented. (FI)

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Language Arts Monograph

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, ILLINOIS OFFICE OF EDUCATION, JOSEPH M. CRONIN, STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

Creative Drama As A Resource, K-12

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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CREATIVE DRAMA AS A RESOURCE, K-12

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FOREWORD

In October, 1974, twenty Illinois language arts professors, teachers and Illinois Office of Education consultants met in Urbana to discuss and to respond to the need for materials especially written for classroom teachers of language arts. The Urbana meeting focused upon a plan to print a number of monographs, each one emphasizing language arts and each one fitting into a series of monographs suggesting the depth of language arts education.

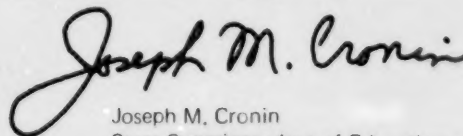
Following the Urbana meeting, monograph authors and editors collected, organized and explained ideas from nearly 50 Illinois contributors. Monograph titles, chapter titles, and section headings covering hundreds of currently employed language arts ideas and practices took shape.

The intent of all the monographs was to combine theory and practice into brief suggestions for classroom teachers of language arts. Although some of the suggestions are new to the profession, most reflect the best teaching practices by experienced Illinois teachers. Some monographs take controversial stances on issues, but even the controversial points of view are clearly within the realms of accepted pedagogy. As planned, all nine monographs report effective, often-used teaching practices.

Monograph authors and editors wrote from their own philosophies, and they wrote about the ways of teaching they knew best; no attempt was made to advance the cause of any particular educational practice or terminology. The monographs respond both to persistent issues as well as to modern trends in language arts education.

More than 50 teachers of language arts gave of their inspiration, time, and patience. Illinois students will profit from such professional efforts given for the good of education in Illinois.

A special thanks should be given to two Illinois Office of Education staff members — Mina Halliday and Alan Lemke. They conceived the idea for the monograph project, guided it to its completion, and made contributions to several monographs. The development of these monographs was a monumental effort to improve education in Illinois and the success of the project can be attributed to Ms. Halliday and Dr. Lemke.



Joseph M. Cronin
State Superintendent of Education

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INTRODUCTION

Creative drama is not a frill activity, it is not something to be done on snowy Friday afternoons when all else fails. It is a teaching process that uses the inherent ability of each person to explore dramatically ideas, behavior patterns and human relationships. With drama the teacher uses what is already there in the classroom — the imagination, the individual uniqueness and the life-experience of the participants. The teacher can use drama as a subject in its own right or drama can be used as a resource to teach other subject areas such as literature, the language arts, reading, creative writing, the arts, speech, theatre and social studies. In each case the teacher must understand the nature of and its potential for aiding the learning process.

Drama just does not happen. The teacher is the most important factor in the drama lesson — not that

he or she takes the drama into the classroom, it is already there, a potential within the participants. The teacher's task is to create a working environment within which the drama can take place and be explored by the participants. How to create this environment is discussed in this monograph. Teachers must realize that teaching drama is serious work for it involves each person totally, drawing on their emotions and their intellect. It is a kind of loving and the teacher must necessarily expose himself or herself as a feeling, sensitive, aware human being. Drama lessons should be well thought and prepared for and each should allow the students freedom to explore their own ideas and actions. The drama cannot be imposed on the students like a straight jacket, it must evolve through their efforts and through the leadership of the teacher. To teach this way is not easy for all participants are asked to involve themselves honestly, drawing on the wellspring of their life experiences. Often the teacher will have to wait for the



drama to evolve at its own pace; he or she must find the rhythm of the group and work in harmony with that rhythm. This may take time and teachers should not rush the work but should allow it to grow at its own pace.

Drama involves action — students will eventually need room to move and explore through drama. A suitable working space is required. Most classrooms are suitable if desks are pushed back, and sometimes groups can work outside or in the gym. A stage is not as suitable as an open space because work in drama is not performance-centered — it is not acting for an audience. Drama involves all class members as participants.

As well as action, drama lessons should include a time for quiet discussion and contemplation of what transpired during the action. Here the teacher can lead participants to examine their involvement in the drama so that students will experience by doing and feeling and then analyze through the process of evaluation. It is important to bring the students to a period of peace and harmony before releasing them to other kinds of learning experiences, to other lessons. This period of discussion and evaluation also makes a nice bridge for the next drama lesson.

A teacher or administrator may well ask why teachers should use drama at all. Drama uses a potential for learning that is in each person, it explores issues that relate to our being human and to our struggle for survival and growth in the complex business of living. Drama allows the students to better understand themselves and the world in which they live. Because drama is so central to the life of each person, rather than ask why teach drama, we should be asking teachers why they are **not** teaching drama and when are they going to start.

WHAT IS CREATIVE DRAMA?

The word drama derives from the greek **drao**, to do or to struggle, and has to do with the doing and struggling of life itself. Creative drama involves an exploration of the possibilities of life played out in a safe and legal environment. Creative drama is a teaching process based on the potential that is within each person, young and old alike. We all play, though we tend to recognize play in terms of the overt and often spontaneous action of children. Adults play as well, but we usually play in our heads, exploring possible alternatives for action, fantasizing different situations, experimenting with ideas. This play can function at a serious level, exploring the conjoining of disparate ideas to produce a new idea, e.g., man, moon, then man on the moon. This imaginative playing with ideas is the first step in making them a reality. Problems of pollution, nuclear disarmament, curing cancer and the myriad problems that face us, if



solved, will be because of the human ability to play with ideas, to conjoin disparate areas of thought and knowledge through the imaginative faculties. This potential for play is the basis for all drama work; creative drama is a structuring of the play process and it is a teaching approach available to all teachers in their classroom setting.

Creative drama involves the dramatic playing out of situations so that the possibilities of life can be tried out and explored. Children should work in creative drama a great deal, though, it should not be seen as an activity for them alone. Children learn through playing in drama; they can try things out, explore new roles, imitate a variety of models, stretch and experiment with their growing vocabulary, and learn to share with and relate to other people. But drama should not end at the completion of elementary school, for it has direct relevance for the teenager and young adult. It can provide a safe and legal environment in which life styles can be tried out and experimented with, rejected or modified. The questions "Who am I?", "Where am I" and "Why am I?" are at least as important for the teenager as they are for the young child. The learning to share ideas, to work closely with others, and to react sensitively to one's self and to others are areas for exploration through creative drama.

It should be pointed out that there are similarities between creative drama and theatre, but that theatre does not encompass creative drama. Creative drama works with the similar raw materials of theatre, human beings in action, in conflict and working towards some resolution of that conflict; only in theatre these raw materials are refined, polished and heightened in a transaction of showing and revealing to an audience. It is this showing before an audience that identifies the art of theatre, that gives it shape

and purpose. Creative drama is for the participants; it does not require an audience nor is it shaped by having to be shown to an audience. It is complete within itself, and its prime goal is to allow the participants to better understand themselves and the world in which they live.



Creative drama is for all students, for it is based on the potential for play that is within each person. Creative drama is not for a talented few. Each person is unique, having in store a combination of positive qualities peculiar to him or her — a combination no one else has in exactly the same way. In education, we need to take time to encourage the individual uniqueness of our students, to allow them growth in, and strength through, self-knowledge. Creative drama is one approach that allows the individual to come to an understanding of his or her strengths and qualities and to share what he or she has with others, learning to give and receive in a dramatic transaction.

The teacher is unique, too, and each teacher will bring to students an approach that is individual and special. The teachers must realize that the classroom is already filled with the potential for drama — they do not take it in with them, for it is already there, a potential force. The teacher's job is to create a working environment within which the drama can take place, and it is the creating of such an environment that is the subject of this monograph. Each teacher must find a style that is appropriate to his or her own experience and relationship with the students. The drama will not come from this monograph — it will come from the imaginations, ideas and interactions of the students.

How Can Creative Drama Be Used?

Creative drama can be used as a teaching area within its own right, or it can be used as a resource for teaching other areas. In this monograph, different developmental stages of drama will be discussed and some suggestions will be given for using drama as a resource for teaching other subject areas such as literature, social studies or speech communication.

THREE AREAS OF CREATIVE DRAMA

The potential for creative drama is within every young person in the classroom situation. It is there before the teacher enters the room, and the teacher's task is to release this force and help shape it in a meaningful way for the student. The teacher must always begin where he or she is, with what he or she has, which is a great deal. There is the latent force of drama in each student, the wealth of his/hers past experiences, the uniqueness of each individual in the room including the teacher and the teacher's understanding of creative drama as an educational process. Part of this understanding can be helped by realizing that, for teaching purposes, creative drama can be categorized into three broad areas. These three areas are part of the whole called "creative drama", but such a division can help teachers plan approaches and allows them to see development in the work being done. The three areas are 1) PRE-DRAMA, 2) FANTASY DRAMA, and 3) HUMAN DRAMA. These three areas should be seen as being on a continuum, merging one into the other, pre-drama into fantasy drama, fantasy drama into human drama. These three broad areas constitute the field of creative drama possibilities, and a teacher needs to realize in which area he or she is working at any time. An understanding of the three areas can help teachers establish directions for working in creative drama and in shaping the creative drama environment.

1) **Pre-drama:** This area includes all the activities that are used to prepare students for work in drama — the beginning, warm-up, preparatory exercises that help students identify their own drama potential. Pre-drama means preparation for drama and through such exercises students develop an understanding of their own possibilities, replacing self-consciousness with self-awareness. They then, also, better understand the nature of the drama activity. Pre-drama includes work in the imagination, sense-awareness exercises, movement work, speech and story-making. Such work can be at the individual level, in small and in large groups. Pre-drama is not an end in itself; it is a beginning in, and a preparation for, drama.

2) **Fantasy drama:** In this area, drama action explores ideas drawn from fantasy, myths, legends, fairy stories, animal adventures and futuristic

events. It is that drama of the imagination in which anything and everything can be a potential for exploration. The creative drama activity takes on a shape — having a definite beginning, a middle consisting of events moving to a climax and a conclusion that brings the action to a complete end.

3) **Human drama:** This third stage involves the exploration of the possibilities of living — in a real sense — for this stage explores human beings involved in the human condition of living. Unlike fantasy drama, it does not explore extremes of fantasy, for students explore the possibilities of being human in the world as we know it. This work has a shape to it, moving from a definite beginning to some resolution of the problem situations. This third stage is the most important one in creative drama, for it allows the students to explore the possibilities for life in a safe and legal environment.

Pre-drama and fantasy drama are stages on the way to human drama and both will be used extensively at the elementary level. But teachers need to recognize that there are three areas and eventually the students will be moving into human drama work.

THE TEACHER'S ROLE — SETTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Because the drama comes from the students, the teacher needs to create a working environment in which students can work openly and harmoniously together. The teacher will need to set guidelines for action and develop a working atmosphere in which ideas and actions can be shared and respected by each participant. In the beginning, the teacher may need to talk about creative drama, forms of play and the imagination, discussing these with the class. Or the teacher may decide to begin immediately with pre-drama activities to reveal some of the potential for drama that is in the class. The teacher needs to know the students, their interests, directions these interests might take, any problems students might have, and their readiness for different stages of drama work.

The creative drama is there, in the class, a potential force waiting to be tapped. It comes from the variety of rich experiences of living the students have had, and all students, even the very young, have had rich and wonderful experiences of life — in fact, a lifetime of experiences. They have watched a bird soaring, or the rays of first light touching a cold, dark sky, caught a snowflake or rode a rolling breaker, felt angry, frightened, tired, hot, hit a ball dead center, or made a difficult catch, shared a moment in time with somebody special, rolled on a lawn, been warmed by the sun, listened to and been moved by the deep silence of the night, or heard the angry whine of a siren in a down-town street after dark. Each person's



life is a rich fabric woven of experiences and this is the core for drama with which the teacher works.

The good teacher approaches a creative drama lesson with the following strengths: his or her own imagination and unique life style; a warmth for and an understanding of students as people; and understanding of the potential for creative drama in the classroom; and a variety of approaches or techniques for developing an environment in which creative drama is possible.

There is a need for flexibility, for what has worked one time may not work another — creative drama must emerge from the group, it should not be enforced on it.

PRE-DRAMA ACTIVITIES

BEGINNING

In the beginning, the teacher should use activities that will involve all the class. In fact, most drama sessions will involve all class members participating in the activities. Creative drama is for all the students in the classroom.

A good place to begin is with the students where they are, at their desks. The teacher can lead a discussion or begin with a number of activities that can be done at the desks. Working at the desks is often a good way to start with elementary classes, third through sixth grades, and it can be effective with junior high classes as well. A number of activities are presented below as examples. Teachers must use activities that are suitable for their students and which challenge their imagination.

Hands:

The hands can become the focus of action. They can be leaves falling from a tree in the autumn, or snowflakes drifting to the ground on a winter's night, or smoke rising from a fire, or water rippling over river stones, or flowers pushing up through the earth, or part of a machine.

The hands can be doing something, e.g., searching for a valuable ring lost in sand, then lost in grey, oozy mud, then in a snowdrift (searching with bare, frost-bitten fingers), then in a large bowl of jello, then in warm, sudsy water.



The hands can be opening a special present that arrived in the mail, picking up an injured pet, dismantling a highly sensitive bomb, peeling and eating a juicy orange without spilling a drop, picking roses on a windy day, icing a cake, carving a chicken, making a clay pot, building a snowman, holding the reins of a horse carriage.

Older students can begin with an exercise of the imagination which has them create their own opening sequence for a film. In this sequence, a person appears doing something specific and the camera zooms in on a series of close-ups until it is showing the person's right hand. Have the right hands of the participants take on the action of the hand in their own film.

An exercise in the imagination for junior high and high school students focuses on the chairs in which they are sitting. It is worthwhile to have students close

their eyes and concentrate on the teacher's voice — by closing their eyes they shut out external distractions and give full concentration to the exercise. First, the students explore the relationships between their bodies and the chairs in which they are sitting, noting the way their weight is distributed, the different pressure points of body on chair, the position of the feet and hands. Then the chair can be changed in the imagination to explore different relationships with different chairs . . . ; eg., the chair can become a dentist's chair, a seat in a 747 waiting to land in a snow storm, a ski-lift half-way up the side of a mountain in Colorado, the driver's seat of a car waiting to pull out into busy traffic in England (remembering that they drive on the wrong side of the road there), a very comfortable leather chair, and finally the relationship between the student and the chair in which he or she is sitting.

Students cannot work at their desks forever. They will need to be up and doing, and often a working space needs to be cleared for them. Movement of desks can create a noisy and disruptive disturbance but there is no reason why such action cannot be incorporated into the drama lesson itself. The desks can become treasure chests filled with gold and jewels that a giant ogre stole when he pillaged the villages and captured all the children. Now he is asleep and the children are planning to escape — but they are taking the treasure chests with them. They must move them quietly so as not to awaken their captor. Or, with older students, the desks can contain acoustic bombs and the desks are being placed in a special demolition truck by highly trained members of a special bomb squad. Not only does such work clear a space quietly, it involves the students' imaginations and powers of concentration.

A working space in the classroom, or a space in a hall or gym, allows for action and now other pre-drama activities can be explored. Pre-drama exercises are used to prepare students for creative drama, to give them a vocabulary of action and movement, and an understanding of their bodies as an instrument of expression. Pre-drama exercises turn students on to their own potential for drama, allowing them to explore possibilities for doing and exploring. Students lose self-consciousness because they learn to work with their own potential, their own uniqueness, and they develop self-awareness. This growing self-awareness serves as a base from which the student extends his or her possibilities for exploring through drama.

Pre-drama activities in each lesson should be developed around a central theme rather than the students being forced to jump from one unrelated exercise to another. The exercises should flow one into another so that some shape and order is given to the lesson. A theme such as snow can relate to different pre-drama exercises . . . ; eg., the students

could use their hands to explore snow falling, then to play with it, roll it into balls, then shovel it and make a large pile. From the piles they could, in pairs, make a snowman (or snowwoman) and then become the snowman and slowly melt in the warm sun. Each exercise requires different skills of exploration but they also relate to each other, there is a sequence and coherence to the lesson.

Students need to develop confidence and understanding in their work, and they should be challenged by what they do. Also the teacher should try to move from work that involves the participants individually to work in pairs and small groups. The teacher should not rush this beginning work but try to take the rhythm of it from the students. The teacher should give students time to explore each exercise, stressing the importance of attention to detail and the need to work honestly. The teacher can suggest the atmosphere, e.g., "the snowman or snowwoman feels strong as he or she stands in the yard, but the sun begins to shine causing the snowman or snowwoman to slowly feel a little weak, a little droopy as he or she begins to melt. It takes time as he or she slowly changes shape." Allow the students time to get inside the possibilities of the exercise, to explore it imaginatively. If the exercise has been selected well, the students will become immersed in it.

Pre-drama exercises can be broken up into different categories: exercises of the **imagination**; **sense-awareness** exercise; **movement** exercises; **sounds** and **speech** exercises; and **story making** exercises.

IMAGINATION

The use of the imagination is central to all work in creative drama, and imagination exercises are a good place to begin. The exercises for working at the desks (given above) are mainly imagination exercises. Another exercise in the imagination is to have the students close their eyes and picture themselves in their most favorite place in the world. What are they doing, what can they see, hear, feel?

SENSE-AWARENESS

The imagination is central to all work in creative drama and the five senses provide the stimuli that generate imaginative thought and action. Children need work using the senses to better understand their immediate environment; with older students sense work can help sharpen receptivity to the world around us. A heightening of sense-awareness allows people to become more aware of themselves and the world in which they live. It develops appreciation for small delicate objects and movements in the universe, making these at least as meaningful as those more easily or readily observed. A heightened sense-

awareness puts the individual more closely in touch with the natural rhythms that shape his or her being.

The five senses, sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, are not equally balanced in terms of stimuli input. We respond much more to sight than to the other senses and the mature adult uses sight often to the exclusion of the other senses in making decisions concerning the body and the environment. Sight is important but the other senses should not be forgotten. Each contributes to our understanding of the world.

Sight:

At the desks: how many different green (yellow, red, etc.) objects are there in the room? How many round objects? How many objects between 15" and 20" in length? The teacher should encourage accuracy and attention to detail, and walks outside the classroom for specific observation can be helpful.

Attention to detail is important for older students, too. The teacher can select three or four similar landscape paintings and use these as the basis for an observation test. One or more students are sent out of the room and the class selects one of the landscapes. They examine



each painting carefully to determine what differentiates the one selected from the others. The student is recalled, looks at the painting, then has five chances to ask individual class members for help. The students can volunteer one point of description each time, and the onus is on the class to select and describe points of detail that will underline the differences in

the chosen painting. It is the class, not the student, which is being tested.

Another exercise in sight is to have students describe the room in which they work without using any "sight" words. They have to use words relating to the other senses. This is quite difficult but does underline the reliance we place on sight.

The blind-walk is a useful sight-deprivation exercise for older students (fifth grade and older). The students are deprived of their sight and use the other senses to explore the environment. The exercise should be set up as a sharing exercise between two people working closely together. One member of the pair undertakes to

close the eyes and keep them closed at all times (a blindfold can be used, but it is not necessary). The other member is the leader, undertaking full responsibility for the partner. The leader does not touch the partner in any way but gives direction by voice, and the teacher may need to demonstrate the precision needed; e.g., "two steps to the right, a half-step forward, reach slowly to the right side. . . ." The partner is not to talk or ask questions but simply be a receptor to the stimuli bombarding him or her. Each partner should have 15 to 30 minutes each, and the walk can cover both inside and outside environments. Students should be encouraged to explore different textures, shapes, items such as water fountains, bike racks, lampposts, trees, areas of different



temperatures, and ground textures (grass, gravel, sand, pavement). Discussion at the end should be encouraged.

Sound:

Sitting at desks, students can close their eyes and listen to the sounds in the room, outside the room, outside the building; how many different sounds can they differentiate? The teacher can prepare a tape recording of different sounds around the community and have the students listen and identify (e.g., paper rustling as pages in a book are turned, water dripping down a drainpipe, a dog scratching, noises at the train station, the crackling of a fire, a pencil sharpener, downtown street sounds). If a number of tape recorders are available, small groups of students can record five separate and distinct sounds in or outside their building and then exchange with another group to see if they can find out and identify each sound. Other sound exercises include: sounds within oneself, block the ears and listen to your heartbeat; what is the loudest sound ever heard, the softest?; what makes a sound frightening, or sad, or irritating?; by using the room as a resource, what different sound sources can be found (e.g. pencils tapping on desks, fingers scraping the board, the trash can, blinds, glass, etc.); musical instruments can be used to discuss different sound qualities; what distinguishing sounds do we use to identify different objects, places, even people? how many different natural sounds can you hear right now, how many artificial or humanly-made sounds can you hear?; list specific sound words to describe the following objects: a lion, a typewriter, a fish, a candle, an old door, a leaf, a river, a steam roller, a tennis ball, a toaster.

Touch:

The whole body is involved in the sense of touch, though we tend to focus on the hands. At desks, students can explore their weight on a chair, the touch of feet on the floor. Within the room and out-of-doors, students can explore different textures, the floor, the different walls, grass, the pavement, a tree trunk. The teacher can bring in items to touch such as velvet, satin, wool, cotton, sand, grain, different types of carpet, sugar, salt, dirt. By closing their eyes and dipping into sacks containing different objects, students can explore different shapes, sizes and textures, pieces of fruit, foreign coins, a feather, a candle, a river pebble, a piece of cork, an ice cube are some items to use.



In small groups, students can pass around hand-crafted objects and use the feel of them to describe who made them (e.g., soapstone carving from Canada, an Australian boomerang, hand-made jewelry or a pot). Students can learn to use touch in understanding the lines of their own faces, or another person's or the lines of a natural object, a rock or a tree limb.

A small group exercise requiring good concentration is the impulse game. Six to eight students make a circle facing inward and cross over their hands before linking them with the person on each side. The circle should be close and comfortable. One person begins by sending an impulse to the left or right and this is done by gently squeezing the hand of the person next to the leader; the signal is passed around the group this way. Students should, in the beginning, close their eyes to help concentration. Two signals going in the same direction, or signals going in opposite directions, can be sent once the group is working well together. This exercise is a good one for beginning work in small groups as it pinpoints the need for group cooperation and sharing.

Smell:

It is often better to pursue exercises in smell outside the classroom, e.g., the cafeteria, the sickroom, the furnace and places like a florist's shop, a bakery, a health food store, a hardware store. How many different places can be identified by smell alone? The teacher can make up a number of smell-jars using the wide variety of spices available, scents, powder, as well as pieces of leather, certain leaves, pebbles, flowers, and oil.

Students can compare the importance of smell for certain animals with the different ways humans use smell. Older students could examine current advertising and the ways it deals with smells; do we tend to use the sense of smell in a negative way? Students could be asked to describe a room by its smell — is this possible? What types of words do we use to describe aspects of smell, how often do we use these?

Students should be encouraged to use the sense of smell more than they do, to see if they can begin to respond to their environment more closely, the smell of wet ground after a rain, the scent of roses or honeysuckle, the smell of peaches, hot sand, car oil, candle wax.

Taste:

Taste and food go together, and it is often difficult to have food items in the classroom. Students can use this sense as a basis for exploring in the imagination, recalling biting into a lemon, eating a chicken leg, a donut, a crisp lettuce salad. Exploring taste differences, pleasurable and unpleasurable tastes, is useful, and the different words used can be a basis for a discussion of the relationship between taste and smell.

MOVEMENT

Creative drama involves action, it is a doing activity and movement is an integral part of most creative drama work. Students need to gain freedom and flexibility with their bodies and some understanding of how their bodies move in the space they fill as well as how to share movement with others in a limited area. Pre-drama exercises in movement can help develop this awareness and control.

Movement work in the beginning needs control, for freedom to move about in a classroom setting may be a new experience for some students. Students have to learn control, discipline and respect for each other's work and working space, and the teacher can help in this. The teacher should indicate some sound or signal upon which all action must cease immediately. This signal can be a hand-clap, a blow on a drum or a tambourine (a whistle is not recommended). This sound should be used consistently so that all action does stop on the signal. The teacher should spend time conditioning students to respond to the signal; e.g., have them walk around the room as soldiers on parade, or a band, or as circus animals; then use the signal checking to see that each person has stopped, frozen in a still position, then continue the activity. Students need this control to allow them



to explore movement possibilities in the classroom setting.

Another way to handle movement in a limited space is to use half-speed or slow motion. Young persons enjoy exploring fight scenes, punching, clubbing or sword-fighting, but such movement is usually too swift and competitive to have much control or a sharing element. By suggesting the action is being filmed at half-pace or in slow motion, the action will be slowed down and a sequence of movement can be built up.

Music is another element for building control. The teacher can carefully select a balance of different rhythmic patterns that will create a framework of sounds within which students can move. Slow heavy sounds can fade into light rapid sounds or dreamy movements, or the fast tempo of a folk dance or a chase scene. For older students, music can be supportive, giving a background of movement stimuli and eliminating the empty silence that sometimes embarrasses older students. Selection of music is important, and some records to consider include: "Clair de Lune" (Debussy), "The Firebird" (Stravinsky), "The Four Seasons" (Vivaldi), "Suite From 'The River'" (Virgil Thomson), "Night on Bald Mountain" (Moussorgsky), "The Planets" (Holst), "Peer Gynt" (Grieg), "Danse Macabre" (Saint-Saens), "Days of Futures Passed" (Moody Blues), "Overture to 'West Side Story'" (Bernstein), "Rhapsody in Blue," and "American in Paris" (Gershwin), "The Sabre Dance" (Katchachurian). Electronic music, moog synthesizer adaptations of Bach, for example, is also useful.

The following are some pre-drama exercises in movement:

- 1) For young children, use colored scarves or pieces of cloth as a focal point. The children can

move following the movement of the scarf — they can become the wind, or rain, or fire, or a river. Music can add a dimension here, moving with the scarf to the music.

2) Young children are constantly growing physically and enjoy exercises that explore growth. The students can explore the growth of a seed, e.g., the teacher can lead the exercises in this way: "You are a seed dropped in the earth and slowly, slowly, you are beginning to grow, pushing upwards towards the life-giving sunlight. But you have been planted in rocky soil and you have to struggle hard to survive. How do you grow as you push upwards to the light?"

3) Exercises using qualities of movement can explore an ice cube melting in the sun, a leaf dropping from a tree, bread rising in an oven, a breaker crashing onto rocks, a flag in the breeze, a water wheel, a camera, a toaster, a dishwasher.

4) Older students can begin by exploring the space immediately around them. They have space in front, to the sides, above, behind, and below them (if they jumped off the ground, for example). They can explore their space by making different shapes, large, small, round, rectangular. If the left foot is "nailed" to the floor so that it cannot be moved, students can then explore how they can now move in this space.

5) A variety of walking movements can be explored: walking on ice; walking up a steep flight of stairs; walking on a tightrope; walking into a dark room so as not to waken somebody; walking across a fast-flowing stream using slippery stepping stones; walking along a narrow ledge.

6) Movement in a restricted space: inside a glass jar that encircles you; inside a paper sack that has one weak spot in it; inside a room that is shrinking.

7) Younger children will explore movement of nonhuman objects quite readily, e.g., trains, circus wagons, steam rollers, deer, elephants, a kangaroo, a hawk, a turtle. Inanimate objects such as a giant oak tree lashed by a fierce gale, a door closing, a rock eroded by wind or water, or a forest fire provide different movement opportunities.

Groups work in movement: once the students have control and some understanding of movement possibilities, the teacher can begin to incorporate work in pairs and in small groups.

1) Mirrors: students should begin facing each other with the palms of the hands close to the palms of the partner, but not touching. The point of concentration should be each other's eyes, and

the work should begin slowly. The purpose is to have the two move as one, rather than a follow-the-leader routine. Slow, deliberate work should be encouraged.

2) Lifting something together, or pulling, pushing something together. It can be enormous, such as the Eiffel Tower or Statue of Liberty. Another exercise is for the pairs to contain a terrific force or power by moving against it, e.g., a flooding river, a door against invaders, holding down a manhole cover.

3) Physical games: students can skip rope, throw balls to each other, logroll, play tennis or badminton, or sword fight.

4) A group can put together the different movements required in a tug o' war contest, realizing the need for total group cooperation to make it work.

5) Working with imaginary balloons or beach balls in pairs and small groups can help with movement skills. Slow motion work can pinpoint ways of moving in this activity. The students in groups of six to eight can become a balloon that is lying limp on the floor, then is blown up and finally let go.

6) Groups can explore movement in nature: a rock pool with seaweed, rocks, shells, fish; a snow slide growing into a roaring avalanche.

7) Objects that are moved: popcorn heated in a pan; leaves being raked and burned; the feathers of a peacock's tail being expanded; dust in a vacuum cleaner.

Movement is all around and students should observe the variety of movement activities in their world and use some of these in their work.

SOUNDS AND SPEECH

Much of the work that takes place in pre-drama does not include speech, though speech will take place as an outburst at the end of many pre-drama exercises, especially when the students have begun work in pairs or small groups. Such speech-flow should be encouraged and time should be included for discussion and conversation.

A number of pre-drama activities can be used that encourage or develop sounds and speech-flow. Young children becoming wheat fields, or trees, or rivers, can accompany their action with sounds. Some movement activities can be accompanied by familiar songs and the children delight in singing as they march as soldiers or work in their flower garden. Some exercises will encourage sharing speech to accompany the

action as in lifting together something incredibly heavy.

A number of specific speech exercises are:

- 1) Creating the sound of a zoo as the animals are getting ready for the dark.
- 2) A group of hats having a conversation, or items of food on a refrigerator shelf, or conversation between different flowers and vegetables in the garden.
- 3) Selling something to a person who is not the least bit interested.
- 4) Answering the telephone to a salesrepresentative, or a friend not seen for a while, or a stranger needing directions to your house from out of town.
- 5) Lost in a strange town and asking for directions; lost in a strange town trying to borrow the train or plane fare home.

Once speech flow is established as a part of the creative drama work, the teacher should try to incorporate situations that will encourage speech within much of the creative drama work.

STORY MAKING

Another aspect of pre-drama work is class discussion leading to story making. Some teachers prefer to begin with discussion that opens up imaginative possibilities and then use the discussion to create a story framework, a story created by the teacher and the class working together. One way to begin is to introduce a topic for discussion that is interesting, intriguing, or controversial. Some such topics include: "You have one wish to make, what would it be?"; "Of all the people you know, who would you most like to be?"; "If you could be in one special place right now, where would it be?"; "How strong are peer group pressures?" The discussion can consider a number of alternatives or examine different points of view, "what might happen if. . ." and quite soon the teacher can be leading the students into action using the discussion as a springboard for work in creative drama.

Story making can develop from the discussion or can be set up as a beginning process for creative drama. The teacher, often with the help of the class, creates a story or retells an old one in a way that will involve the students in the dramatic potential of the incidents in the story. The students can help by creating characters or in adding details to the clothing or appearance of the characters or in helping to describe the setting. Adding appropriate sound effects for the action may also be tried, though serious work is to be stressed, for students can easily slip into silly imita-

tions or use stereotyped sounds if not guided to work in-depth with appropriate sounds.

Young students, particularly, enjoy stories, and story making can provide a basis for dramatic shape and action. Soon students may try acting out parts of the story or acting out a conclusion to an unfinished story they have been working on in class. As they begin to shape the drama work into a definite story line, the students are moving from pre-drama to fantasy drama.

FANTASY DRAMA ACTIVITIES

Fantasy drama gives students the opportunity to explore inner thoughts and fantasies, imaginative situations, and the possibilities of action in inanimate objects. Students are able to take ideas and by using basic body movements and sound effects, transform them into creative drama. This action will develop a shape or structure having a definite beginning, a middle part of exploration and adventure and a definite conclusion. Fantasy drama can be quite abstract and often does not require speech. It is not unusual for the work to have a dance or ballet-like quality as students use body movement to express ideas in action that are imaginative, coming from fantasy, nature, and literature.

A group of children being raindrops, forming rivulets on the ground, then joining together as streams to form a river, rushing down gorges or over waterfalls to the sea — this is an example of beginning work in fantasy drama. Literature can provide the framework for action, interpreting stories or poems in



an imaginative way. The poem "Jaberwocky" by Lewis Carroll is an example of a piece that can be interpreted through movement and sound effects in fantasy drama. Or a space ship, touching down on an unknown planet, can provide the beginning for work that explores futuristic possibilities through fantasy drama. Anything that moves, or has shape or form, anything that is unreal, extinct, mythical, legendary, or out of science fiction can begin to be explored in the framework of fantasy drama. In this work, students are able to play out completely imaginary situations—young students may be enchanted animals or flowers in a magic garden about to be changed into human form; teenagers may become trees in the jungle of Vietnam discussing their fear and concern over defoliation chemicals.

SHAPE — B.M.E.

The work students do in fantasy drama should include the notion of form or structure, with a beginning, middle, and end (B.M.E.). The students need not only to play with ideas in action, they need to give some direction to the action. They should be required to organize their ideas in some working order that is satisfying to them, the shaping coming from within the action. The teacher can ask such questions as "How might this begin?," "What caused this to happen?," "What is the next step?" to help develop order and, similarly, movements towards a possible conclusion should be encouraged. The action should come to a conclusion that is satisfying to the participants and in harmony with the preceding action.

Students should be encouraged to have a beginning that sets the action in motion, a middle that explores and discovers different adventure areas and moves towards a point of climax, the climax itself where the action comes to a head, some form of resolution and movement towards harmony, peace, rest — the conclusion. This framework gives broad parameters within which students can work and helps the students order the experience, forcing them to select and shape possible action in a consistent and developing way.

ACTIVITIES

In the beginning, the teacher may have to give leadership in setting up the framework for the action; e.g., with a group of young children; spring can be explored as a time of growth by the children becoming vegetables and plants in a garden. The teacher can begin by asking questions about spring, what kinds of things happen, then leading to the fact that plants begin new life. Then each child can become a special seed planted in the garden, each having its own growing space. Slowly, the plants begin to grow, some tall, others short — growing close to the ground, some are

flowers, and some are vegetables. Once the garden is grown, it can be tended; and as a finale, fruit, vegetables, and flowers can be gathered and a feast can be prepared. A well-earned rest can bring the activity to a conclusion. An offshoot of such a lesson can be a list of descriptive words, each child having his or her own special vegetable or flower word, as a basis for vocabulary building.

An older group can explore the breaking up of a super oil tanker and the resulting chaos and destruction caused by the leaking oil. As a beginning, the students can be the tanker as it runs aground, then become the oil spreading out to foul the environment. A variety of avenues can be explored: damage to wildlife, beaches and humans; or attempts to dissipate the oil by using detergent; or cleaning up the environment. The climax can be the ultimate effect on the environment as in the slow death of a sea bird, or the bombing of the tanker to destroy it, or some aspect of the incident that will lead to a conclusion satisfactory for the preceding action.

Nature:

Nature provides a wide variety of possibilities for exploration in fantasy drama. Students can become the elements in a storm at sea, with a gentle calm swell building up into a raging storm that batters the coast, or they can be trees and animals caught in the awful destruction of a forest fire that is eventually stopped by rain; or they can be different parts of the life cycle of a flower, or the day itself as it runs through its twenty-four hours; or the differing aspects of each of the four seasons; or the teeming life at the bottom of the sea; or the slow formation of clouds as they build up into a storm or a tornado; or the meandering journey of a river as it runs from its tiny source in the mountains until it spreads itself out in miles of delta land where it runs into the sea.

In working with different aspects of nature, students should be led to examine the qualities that are expressed by the material objects. If students are working with inanimate objects; e.g., rocks, a tree, a beach, or a road, they need to determine what qualities they see or feel to be present in the object. These qualities are, after all, humanly bestowed on the world around us and the qualities allow the students to explore the "being" of the object. For example, students may determine that a boulder has the following qualities: heavy, rough, craggy, jagged, round — all of which can be expressed in physical action by the body. It is in this identifying of qualities that students find a sympathy with the world around them, describing it in their own terms.

Once qualities have been determined, these can be translated into action. Students can shape a forest, quiet in the early morning sun — there is a solitude, a majesty, as the life of the forest is going on. A dropped match begins a small fire in a bunch of dried grass that flares suddenly, spreading outwards, growing in strength and power. The students can explore contrasting movement with the silence and majesty of the forest, still, tall shapes and angles contrasted by the quick, rolling, spurting movements of the fire as it begins as a spark spreading, spreading out and upwards. Sound effects can accompany the action or can be prepared especially and placed on a tape recorder to be used during the drama. Different climaxes are possible and the students should create their own. Rain falling can eventually subdue the fire, slowly reducing it to a smoldering, dying glow and the forest a stark graveyard.

Such activity will have a good deal of movement and students should use their whole bodies to express the different qualities being explored. Occasionally, it may be necessary to return to some pre-drama exercises in movement to help students fully realize the potential for movement and action the body has or to develop better control. Students should use all the space available and different height levels can be useful — several rostrum blocks will be helpful here.

Fantasy:

Fantasy provides almost unlimited sources for action. Students can be underwater creatures trapped in a cave, robots from another planet, monsters terrifying a village or a city, giants seeking a friend among the smaller people. In exploring this fantasy world, the teacher should lead the students into an honest examination of the action. Children may be happy to be monsters for a while, walking around and roaring, but it is the teacher's task to shape a definite story line out of the idea. They may ask, "Why are the people frightened by the monster?"; "Have they actually seen the monster or is it something they have built in their imagination?"; "Does the monster like anything at all, does he love anything at all?" Such questions can lead the students to deeper considerations of the story they are building and can lead them out of imitation into creation.

Myths and Legends:

Myths and legends can merge with fantasy to produce interesting frameworks for action. Ghosts, hobgoblins, and Halloween can provide a wealth of material as can action involving

dragons, or quests for treasure or lost continents, or knights of the round table. Stories from legends can provide a working framework for the action or suggest areas for imaginative exploration. Students should be encouraged to develop their own ideas rather than acting out someone else's ideas. The bare bones of myth and legend can be fleshed out by the students' own interpretation of characters and events. Jason and his crew can argue at length about routes to take to the Golden Fleece or how to escape from their perils. Or the action becomes the students' own as they escape from the cave of the Cyclops or become drugged in the world of the Lotus Eaters, using the story of Ulysses as a framework for action.

Literature:

Literature is a rich source of ideas for fantasy drama. Poems and stories can suggest working frameworks or set guidelines for action. In using the stories or poems, the action of the drama should come directly from the ideas of the students. The stories should be the stimuli for action ideas, not scripts that have to be slavishly followed word for word. Teachers should not impose a story line on the students, but have them use it as a guide. Many stories are better read than "acted-out," and fantasy drama that uses a poem or a story should be seen as an exploration, not as imitation or reproduction.

Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" is a good example of a poem providing the story line for action. The poem has the advantage of being ambiguous enough to allow different interpretations of characters and setting. There is a story line, the quest of the young person for the Jabberwocky and his successful return. The teacher may start with the first stanza, asking students to identify "groups of things." "Brillig" may become the atmosphere and students can make their own environment creating the place and the mood. Slides can be made by the students, and taped sound effects can also be used. The teacher can break the class into small groups to explore the movement and sound of "slithy toves," "the borogroves," and "the mome raths." It should be pointed out that the poem provides descriptions of the actions of the different participants in the poem. How the different groups move and sound will depend on their interpretation of the clues given in the poem. Other creatures, the Jubjub bird, the Bandersnatch, the Jabberwock, and the Tumtum tree, are open to interpretation, and the students will have to give each creature distinctive pattern of movements and sounds.

The poem has a definite shape to it, too, which may prove helpful. It begins in a time and place and returns to that time and place for its conclusion. Students may be asked if the "brillig" or the conclusion is exactly the same as the "brillig" of the beginning, or have the events changed to atmosphere in any way? "Jabberwocky" is only one example of a poem that can be used as a guide for dramatic action in fantasy drama. Incidents from stories as different as *Charlotte's Web*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Treasure Island*, and *Watership Down* can be very useful for stimulating ideas. Students should be encouraged to bring stories they enjoy or have read recently to class for discussion of possibilities.

Music:

Music can act as a stimulus for movement and sometimes can give a suggestion for action. The "Sabre Dance" has a definite beginning, a long middle that builds to a climax, and an abrupt end. It might suggest a story line for the students. The action might take place in an eastern bazaar where merchants are busy displaying their different wares to rich customers. A young boy, poor and hungry, moves from one tent to another, then suddenly, steals some food only to be chased by the owner. Others join in and soon the boy is being pursued by almost all the people at the bazaar — he is almost caught, but finally jumps over a wall and is gone.

Older students may draw on the popular songs of the time for ideas. The Beatles' "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" could provide a strange psychedelic quest using slides, sound and movement; or Harry Chapin's song "What Made America Famous" might create a line of exploration into tolerance and understanding.

Fantasy drama may draw on a number of sources for ideas, but what is done should come from the students themselves as they create their own action. Fantasy drama will be quite popular at the elementary level, though it can be used in both the junior high and high school. It should be remembered that fantasy drama is part of the whole area of creative drama and that, eventually, students should move from fantasy drama into human drama.

HUMAN DRAMA

The third area of creative drama is human drama in which students explore the possibilities of being human in the world as we know it. This work involves the interchange of relationships between human beings living in a societal setting. This third area is the most important in creative drama, for it allows

immediately for the exploration of the possibilities of life in a safe and legal environment. It has to do always with human beings, either in isolation or in some relationship with each other and with the situations in which human beings struggle with life — with its joys, its hopes, its pain, its love, and its sorrow. Usually the drama centers around some form of problem and the action evolves from the attempts, successful or otherwise, of the participants playing out the situation to solve that problem.

Pre-drama and fantasy drama are stages on the way to human drama. Usually, some aspects of these stages will have been explored with students before beginning work in human drama, and this is especially true at the elementary school level. At the high school level, a teacher may decide to begin with human drama, but some beginning activities in pre-drama and fantasy drama are usual before working in human drama. Often, work in human drama can be supported or improved by using some pre-drama work to heighten concentration or to underline the need for close group cooperation in a sharing sequence.

Some aspects of human drama can be explored by individuals in isolation, but usually this work is a group activity with small or large groups. Always, it needs to be a shared and cooperative effort. This means ideas have to be developed through sharing and sometimes individual participants will have to give up part of their ideas or modify them so that they will work for the group as a whole. The planning and preparation that leads into drama is very important, for it is here that the basis for exploration is built, not just with ideas, but with the development of group cooperation. Each individual has to feel the potential for the human drama and want to contribute to it, and this is where the teacher's skill in creating the working environment is all important.

The ideas for human drama are almost unlimited. They can come from the students themselves, from problem areas in their lives or from an area of interest, from newspaper items, from events in history, from literature — from any area that records the struggle of men and women exploring their existence on this spinning globe. These ideas create the framework for the action, they are the stimuli out of which the action will grow. This action will have shape, a beginning point, and a movement toward a resolution or conclusion. Much time can be spent exploring the variety of possibilities for the action, but, eventually, students must come to a resolution to satisfy themselves and the flow of action they have created.

Through human drama, students can most closely experience real self-understanding of their own lives and their own life-worlds, the worlds in which they live. This understanding is the major goal of all creative drama teaching, and human drama should pro-

vide students with experiences in exploring decision-making and problem-solving processes, to allow them to better cope with life and the living of it. Such experiences, to be meaningful, must move away from stereotyped reaction and behaviors to an honest, indepth examination of what may happen in a situation. This examination will involve intense emotional experiences, and drama must work with the emotions, not in a wallowing, self-indulgent way, but honestly, to allow a better understanding of why people behave and react in situations the way they do. To work positively with the emotions takes time and places quite a burden on the creative drama teacher, for the emotional involvement cannot be imposed from without — it must grow from within the groups and in terms of the action they are exploring.

It is not sufficient for a group to have a strong emotional experience in human drama, though it is necessary. The students need to have the experience, but they need also to examine the nature of that experience. They need to reflect or contemplate or evaluate what has taken place. The doing, the action, is one part of the process. The preparation for the action and some analysis of what took place after the action is over are equally important parts of this process. Taken together, they form a process that is an exciting and dynamic way of teaching.

Human Drama Activities

There are almost unlimited examples of situations that can be explored in human drama for it involves "people" situations. The situations can be family-centered: a father just fired from his job facing the uncertainty of unemployment, a daughter wanting to move into her own apartment, an argument about where the family should go for the next vacation, conflict over watching one TV program rather than another, argument about which son should have the car tonight, the decision of a mother to go back to a university to study for a higher degree. Or the situations can be caused by external forces: a group of people traveling together suddenly isolated from the outside world by a snowstorm, or a group of shipwrecked passengers on a lifeboat, a town threatened by a plague or a flood or a fire; the capture of a town or city by foreign soldiers. The situation can explore interpersonal relationships such as a young man and woman trying to be honest with each other about their fears and feelings, or it may revolve around the dynamics of a group, a gang about to commit a crime of violence. These situations are the bare bones that may lead to drama, not the drama itself. This comes with the doing, with the exploring through action, and the intensity and honesty of the action and will depend very much on the environment that has been created by the teacher.



Example 1:

One activity that led to human drama began this way with a group of sixth graders. The teacher and students began discussing the way society shapes behavior, which led to a discussion of how people might react if these restraints of our society were removed. The teacher set the following scene: "You are a group of students, a class, travelling together on a plane journey and the plane crashes killing all the adults. You find yourself on this long beach with the sea on one side and thick jungle on the other. You are on an island that is uninhabited. You have just come together on the beach, it is two o'clock in the afternoon. What would you do?" This led to discussion of a number of alternatives and while the discussion was going on, the teacher suggested the students lay it out. They readily agreed and, clearing away the desks, they set the scene and began. At first, there was a long pause, a general uncertainty about what should be done, until one boy proposed another as a leader to get the group organized. (Such waiting and slow beginnings should not be interrupted, for students need time to grope for appropriate action. They may explore a number of different approaches before they get one they like.) Different activities were then given to different groups: finding fresh water, finding wood for the fire, searching for fruit and for materials to construct a shelter of some kind for the night. Some differences of opinion about priorities arose and some arguments about who should be leader crept in. The teacher stopped the action and the group discussed what was happening and where problems might arise in the future. The class pursued this story-line over several class sessions, building up a society on the island and exploring problems of splits in the party, exploration of the island, fears of the long night darkness, and plans for seeking help. Of course, the story-line is borrowed from Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies*, and such a lesson would be a good introduction to a study of the novel. The teacher in these lessons helped shape the action by asking questions and leading discussion about possible alternatives to the action. The teacher did not give the students roles to play out, but provoked their imaginations by asking "What if . . . ?" questions or by pointing out what was possible in the situation. Also, the teacher took the students forward in time, suggesting at one stage that the students had been on the island now for two weeks. The teacher needs to help the students explore possibilities and can do this by keeping in touch with the rhythm of the action, seeing in which directions it might be going. The action should be allowed to develop without too much interference, but there will be times when the teacher needs to redirect the action to give the students a new perspective on what is possible.

Example 2:

In one class, a group of fifth graders were sailors on a ship that has been at sea for weeks. Most of the sailors believed the world was flat and were convinced their captain was going to sail them off the edge of the world. The captain and a few officers and crew believed the world was round and were convinced that they would soon strike land. The sailors had reached the point of despair where they had called a meeting with the captain to urge him to turn back. He would not, and the meeting was getting tense, even angry. Several sailors threatened to throw the captain over and action stuck there with threats from both sides being issued. The teacher stepped in, congratulated the group for their good work and asking, "What might happen that would save the captain at this stage?" Taking the response that land is sighted, the group worked through the meeting again, but this time it was interrupted by the lookout (perched on a chair sitting on a table) shouting "Land Ho," and the action moved on. Later, the teacher had the children examine the way they felt about the captain at the meeting and how they felt when land was sighted. The question, "Would this solve all your problems?" opened the way for discussion about further possible action.

Example 3:

With older students, the teacher may wish to work in another way, examining problems in small group situations. The students can get into groups of four to six, and the teacher can have them find a problem that is a problem for a group of people. The people may be living together as a family, or sharing a house or living in a residence hall; they may be on vacation or going about the normal routine of daily living; or the group may be strangers in some situation, and they are confronted by a problem that is a problem for the whole group. The first task of the group is to identify a problem for the group, and it has to be a problem all members of the group are prepared to work with and explore. This discussion and brainstorming should not be rushed, for it is essential that each student feel comfortable with the problem finally agreed upon. Once this problem is identified, the group needs to find the **flashpoint**, where the problem becomes a problem for the whole group e.g., when the father walks in and announces to his family gathered around the table, "I've just been fired."

In discussing what is the problem for the group of people, some development of characters in the situation will have taken place. Now the students should be encouraged to create a person they would like to explore behaving in this situation, and have them develop some background for the

person, not only external, but internal as well: what personal values does the person have, how does the person feel about a number of different items; e.g., alcohol, religion, the Republican party, teenagers, money, God, foreigners, minorities, family, Sundays. When the group has some feeling for the people involved in the situation and the basic relationship between members in the situation, they should begin. The teacher must remember that the exploration will take place through doing, through human drama in action. The groups should begin at the moment of flashpoint and work from there. It is possible to have five or six groups at the same time in the room exploring different problems. Once the action is proceeding well and group interaction is strong, the teacher may wish to lead the group into more indepth work by asking questions of the group members in their characters, i.e., the individual responds as the person he or she has created. Such questioning takes skill and should lead the participants forward in creating an indepth person.

This work should lead to a resolution of the problem, though the resolution does not have to please the group members equally. It should be a resolution that grows out of the action, consistent with the behavior patterns exhibited by the group members. When the action is completed, time should be set aside for discussion so that the group can analyze what has taken place. This discussion and analysis is very important.

Example 4:

Another source of ideas is in history, for history tends to record high or low points of our existence; never the mundane — exploration, wars, famine, riots, strikes, assassinations, and victories provide a wealth of material for human drama situations. One way to begin with a group this way is to have them go back in time one hundred years and create a town that might have existed in Illinois one hundred years ago. The Civil War is well over, westward expansion is booming, and the town is becoming prosperous. As well as building the town, each person is encouraged to build a person who might have lived in the town at that time. (It is better to have the people created be adults, children are too difficult to create accurately.) Slowly, with help and direction from the teacher, the students can begin moving as their character, walking around the town as the person. Students should create a background for the person, family, occupation, a value structure as well as distinguishing characteristics. A setting where all the people might come together should be developed, e.g., a church ice-cream social. Some people will be out of place there and should so respond. This situation allows the students to try out the character they have developed and to further build behavior patterns for the person.

Discussion will reveal who the different townsfolk are, and it is often a good idea to have the students write a biography (or, indeed, an autobiography) of their character. These can be typed up and placed around the room, allowing for a sharing of the different people created. Once the town is established, the group can identify a problem for the town that would affect all the townsfolk. It might be a natural disaster, a flood or a drought, or it may be a stranger arriving in town, disrupting the people (the Mormons had their leader killed in Illinois), or a problem of town finances. The group can then explore how the problem is to be dealt with in action.

Such work as this can readily lead to research into the period to discover what happened, what dress was like, how much a loaf of bread cost, what were some of the problems for Illinois towns in the 1870's. One class built a human drama situation around the Pullman strikes in the 1890's, researching indepth the events leading up to the strikes and the conditions in the town of Pullman.

The Final Goal

Human drama is at the heart of creative drama work. It should be the final goal of all work in creative drama, for pre-drama and fantasy drama should eventually lead to human drama. Pre-drama and fantasy drama can have purpose only when seen by the teacher in perspective, as steps toward human drama. This is not to dismiss pre-drama and fantasy drama activities, for they are important and can be used extensively. Teachers need to realize that there is more, and that eventually students must work in a human drama setting, exploring being and becoming in terms of the life experience.

Human drama can take many forms, but it always involves humans in human situations, and the situations should be believable and understood in terms of present knowledge. Futuristic exploration is better examined as fantasy drama, though it can have strong human drama overtones. Human drama, the exploration of human interaction in crisis or conflict situations, is the most important area of drama. Pre-drama and fantasy drama have their place, but eventually students should be led to experiences in human drama.

WHY CREATIVE DRAMA? — OBJECTIVES

Current trends of education stress the student-oriented structure of learning. Learning by doing is a commonly accepted and proven method of effective education, and has been shown to improve the student's understanding and growth in the classroom.

According to Peter Slade, author of *Child Drama* and a pioneer in the use of drama for British education, drama is based on the child's natural ability to play. Its purpose is stated as follows:



/Play/ because of its qualities of constant discovery and its dependence upon personal rhythm, . . . is the ideal form of education for each Person, according to his/her unhurried ability to absorb, remember and re-use knowledge . . . Play is the Child's way of thinking, proving, relaxing, working, remembering, daring, testing, creating and absorbing. Except for the actual physical processes, it is life. It may well prove in future years that if Play is the actual manner of a Child's way of life, then Play may be the correct approach to all forms of education.¹

Why creative drama for a method of education? Our educational system, regardless of structure, exists to promote thinking, working, remembering, testing, creating and absorbing within the classroom. Drama, because of its affinity with natural growth processes, inherent in our ability to play, is a natural, inherent method of learning.

The following objectives will help to answer the "why" of drama in the classroom, plus give some areas upon which the teacher can focus for finding long-term results in using drama in his/her classroom. For further reading, teachers should refer to one of the following four texts: Ruth Heining and Lyda Stillwell, *Creative Dramatics for the Classroom Teacher*; Peter Slade, *Child Drama*; Winifred Ward, *Playmaking with Children*; and Brian Way, *Development Through*

Drama. (These texts are annotated in the bibliography section.) For the student's intrapersonal development, the use of drama will help to:

1. encourage, stimulate, and guide the imaginative potential of each student.
2. aid in the full development of personality by stressing originality and the use of intuition.
3. help toward some fulfillment of personal aspiration by providing for self-expression in a safe, controlled environment.
4. provide for the personal exploration, release, and mastery of the positive inner resources of the child.
5. develop control of the body as an instrument of expression and to become self-confident in expressing imaginary ideas through physical action.
6. give students confidence in their own ability to express ideas in an imaginary way.
7. provide environment in which students can experience joy and a sense of accomplishment in working with their unique creative potential.
8. develop a confident speech flow in which words express imaginary ideas.

For the student's inter-personal and group interaction development, the use of drama will help to:

1. develop an understanding of how to share space and respect other people's work in their space.
2. develop language arts skills in a shared situation such as listening, concentration, verbal communication, understanding of symbolic, abstract concepts.
3. exercise indepth sharing of ideas in action so that students will learn to give up some of their own uniqueness to work with others in creating.
4. develop an attitude of self-awareness and the acceptance of others in mutual respect.
5. have the opportunity to explore different patterns of human behavior by creating role/characters who will act and react with other roles/characters in human situations. This will enable students to better understand themselves and the world in which they live.
6. develop skills as a group member and develop respect for other members.
7. develop understanding of human behaviors by doing and discussion.

¹Peter Slade, *Child Drama* (London: University of London Press Ltd., 1954), p. 42.

8. increase competence and confidence in group work and problem solving.
9. develop ability to accept limitations of other people and build on their strengths.
10. aid in the development of improving concept formation in cross-disciplinary studies.

These objectives can be attained through the use of drama with any subject matter if the proper attitudes (absorption, commitment) and environment (safe, controlled) are maintained in the classroom. Drama, if used with these objectives in mind, can and will be a highly effective method of education, combining cognitive and affective skills in an enjoyable yet serious progression.

LESSON STRUCTURE AND SAMPLES

This section includes a sample lesson and some basic suggestions for building a lesson plan. It is important to remember that, while the drama comes from the students, it is the teacher's responsibility to provide the stimulus which will encourage the students to act. The teacher must be aware of the students' level and interests, and react to this in beginning a lesson. Rather than rely on being triggered by the students for a lesson, the teacher must plan two, three, or more activities, pulling from the repertoire that specific exercise which will best fit the class mood and ability.

In planning a lesson, it is often advisable to follow four basic areas, planning activities which will provide experience in these areas. Lessons should also follow a theme or objective which gives purpose and progression to the overall unit. The four elements included in the basic lesson structure are:

1) Creating the environment: the teacher will need to set or create a working environment for the drama. Pre-drama exercises will be useful as will discussion or use of stimuli material such as music, photography, art, etc. In order to stimulate discussion, the teacher might ask: "Have you ever lost something valuable...?" or, "Have you ever thought what it might be like to be wrecked on a desert island without adults...?" or, "How would you move underwater...?"

2) Shaping the drama action: the teacher will lead the students to a definite beginning point by pinpointing the area for exploration, i.e., the teacher can say: "Begin to look for the article you lost..."; or, "You are on the beach of the island, begin to organize yourselves..."; or, "Begin to move as an underwater creature..."

3) Action: this is where the participants explore the situation set up by the teacher. It can include

individual work, work in pairs, in small groups, or the whole group working together. Action can be carried out at the desks, but most drama action will need an open working space. Action will be either pre-drama, fantasy, or human drama.

4) Discussion and follow up: this will involve discussion and analysis of what has taken place in the drama, what the students have learned about themselves and their capabilities, and what they have learned about their human condition. Work in human drama should eventually involve discussion about the behavior patterns of other people. Students need to have the experience of drama but they also need to come outside the drama action and examine what has taken place, thus each lesson should have a period of contemplation and outflow. It is not wise to turn students out of a drama class without a period of contemplation and quiet analysis. Such discussion could also be a bridge for the next drama lesson.

In first lessons with the class, the teacher needs to lead and shape much of the action. This is done by suggesting what to do, defining the perimeter and possible action. The students fill in how to do it from their own experience.

When designing a lesson, it is important to consider the fact that taking activities straight from a book rarely guarantees success. It is better to create your own variations to meet the needs, age, and interests of the students. For instance, a familiar beginning activity used to establish body control and the sense of growth uses the imagery of a seed growing to maturity. High school students will have a hard time accepting this example seriously. If this type of activity seems necessary or appropriate, a simple change in imagery may make it a meaningful experience: a tiny transistor-type bomb which explodes in slow motion (without damaging anything) to produce 2; the friendly nature of a person, who is terribly shy and withdrawn, finally breaks out of the concrete shell that has lasted 16 years.

Another vital part of designing a lesson is to make sure the warm-up activity blends with the theme or is a catalyst for theme development. The evaluation time is as necessary to the total experience as is the warm-up and action. During this time period, the students can reflect on the implications of the activity and the teacher can insure that an education perspective is maintained. It is also useful as a transition time into the next period. The following lesson for elementary grades clarifies these points.

Assuming the children have done some work with changing body shape in space, here is where you can begin:

- a) Pass out various lengths of string, one to each child.

- b) Have them experiment with various shapes they can make with the string (standing, sitting, lying on the floor).
- c) Ask them to use the string to make letter shapes with their bodies.

This is the warm-up which uses body control with the imagination, plus visual and kinesthetic memory the develop and recognize letter shapes in "3-D."

- d) Divide into small groups (those with the same length of string; or two long, two short, two medium lengths in each group) and challenge them to spell a word together using body/string shapes.
- e) Have them use their group word as a theme or subject for a short group drama — you may decide, depending upon the group experience, whether to ask them to do it in silence (Pantomime) or with words — you may want to specify or leave it to group decisions to deal with real people or use a more abstract form.

In the structure, this would be considered the action part of the lesson.

- f) End with private group discussion of their work, open class discussion of the different projects and how they evolved, or sharing "re-plays" of the group solutions to the problem.

This is the fourth important part of a lesson: discussion and follow-up. It is important to insure closure of the lesson, a means to making application from activity to life, and to have time to see just "what we've accomplished today."

This section was designed to give you a jumping-off point for exploration into the use of drama with your students.

CONCLUSION

The potential for drama is in each student, an inherent force for exploring and discovering life — a force for learning. In this monograph, a number of activities in drama have been outlined and a suggested sequence has been described. These are beginning steps only. The teacher has to decide to teach in this way, if it is in keeping with his or her style in the classroom. Each teacher has to find the drama for himself or herself because it will evolve from the interaction of students, teacher, and classroom atmosphere. Drama is not a system to be imposed on a group of students, but a process to be developed and shaped.

Books, films, and teacher-workshops can help in giving directions and activities, but eventually the drama, the doing, must come from the teacher's interaction with the students. It is exciting and challenging work, and it can enhance ongoing teaching or subject areas. Drama is not the panacea for education, but it does work with natural abilities and forces within each student, and it can lead to a deeper examination of the possibilities of living. It does not have to be taken into the classroom; as long as a room has students in it, the potential for drama is present.

SELECTED BASIC RESOURCE TEXTS

Heining, Ruth and Lyda Stillwell. **Creative Dramatics for the Classroom Teacher.** Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1974. (285 pages)

Ruth Heining is with the creative dramatics program at Western Michigan University. The authors identify the objectives of creative drama along with sample activities that coincide with language arts, reading, science, and social studies. They provide lists of resources to help the teacher develop her/his style of implementing drama in the curriculum.

Slade, Peter. **Child Drama.** (9th edition) Warwick Lane, London: University of London Press, Ltd., 1973. (U.S. Publisher: Lawrence Verry, Inc., 16 Holmes Street, Mystic, Conn. 06355) (379 pages) Peter Slade is an authority on the value of Drama and Play in education. He illustrates the role drama plays in all elements of an individual's growth, focusing on such activities as music, movement, language development, improvisation, and role-playing within the British system.

Ward, Winifred. **Playmaking with Children.** (2nd edition) New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957. (341 pages)

This book is written by the acknowledged leader in creative dramatics in the U.S. It is an introduction to the American philosophy and deals with creative dramatics for children from kindergarten through junior high. She includes philosophies and activities for both the classroom and for outside groups.

Way, Brian. **Development Through Drama.** (4th printing) Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1967. (In Britain: London: Longmans, Green, and co., Ltd.) (308 pages)

Brian Way is a disciple of Peter Slade and a leading British author in the field of creative drama. In this book, he presents a general philosophy of drama and many helpful suggestions and activities for the teachers interested in beginning creative drama with their class.

The following books might also be useful for teachers interested in creative drama:

Burton, Ernest James. **Drama in Schools:**

Approaches, Methods, and Activities. London: H. Jenkins, 1955, 1964.

Cullum, Albert. **Push Back the Desks.** New York: Citation Press, 1967.

Gillies, Emily. **Creative Dramatics for All Children.** Washington, D.C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1973.

Kemp, David. **A Different Drummer: An Ideas Book for Drama.** Toronto, Ontario: McClelland and Stuart, Ltd., 1972.

Lowndes, Betty. **Movement and Creative Drama for Children.** Boston: Plays, Inc., 1971.

McCaslin, Nellie. **Creative Drama in the Classroom.** New York: D. McKay Co., 1968.

McIntyre, Barbara. **Creative Drama in the Elementary School.** Ithica, Illinois: F. E. Peacock Publishers, 1974.

Mearnes, Hughes. **Creative Power: The Education of Youth in the Creative Arts.** New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1958.

Pemberton-Billing, Robin N. and J. D. Clagg. **Teaching Drama: An Approach to Educational Drama in the Secondary School.** London: University of London Press, 1968.

Schwartz, Dorothy and Dorothy Aldrich. **Give Them Roots and Wings.** American Theatre Association, 1317 F. St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004, 1972.

Siks, Geraldine Brian. **Creative Dramatics, An Art for Children.** New York: Harper and Row, 1960.

Spolin, Viola. **Improvisation for the Theatre.** Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1963.

Other Sources

CD News

P. O. Box 2335
Providence, R.I. 02906

CEMREL, Inc.
Aesthetic Education Program
3120 59th Street
St. Louis, Missouri 63139

Regional area service centers for Gifted and Talented Students, Illinois Office of Education.

Agency for Instructional Television
Box A
Bloomington, Indiana, 47401

Professional Organizations*

American Theatre Association
1317 F Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

The Secondary School Theatre Association and Children's Theatre/Creative Drama Association are affiliates of this national theatre organization which holds an annual convention and publishes materials of interest to K-12 teachers.

Central States Speech Association
Dr. David M. Berg, Executive Secretary
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

Illinois Association of Teachers of English
Mr. Wilmer Lamar, Executive Secretary
100 English Building
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Illinois Speech and Theatre Association
Central Office, MacMurray College
Jacksonville, Illinois 62650

The ISTA publishes a newsletter and journal, holds an annual convention with meetings of interest to teachers, K-12, and sponsors workshops.

Illinois Theatre Association
P.O. Box 2480
Station A
Champaign, Illinois 61820

This organization has an annual convention, activities such as the Illinois High School Theatre Festival.

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 Kenyon Road
Urbana, Illinois 61801

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills is at the same address.

Oral Interpretation Workshop

This is a statewide organization of twelve universities and colleges which meets each Spring at a different campus each year. Membership is limited to college-level faculty and students, but visitors are always welcome. For information, contact Charlotte Waisman, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois 60625.

Speech Communication Association
5205 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, Virginia 22401

The SCA has two publications of interest to K-12 teachers: *Communication Education*, a journal for speech educators; and *Talk-Back*, a newsletter for teachers. *Communication Education*, formerly called *The Speech Teacher* is available in college and university libraries, or one may subscribe by joining the SCA.

The ERIC/SCA Speech Communication Clearinghouse at the SCA address has listings of many materials and bibliographies.

*Each organization conducts an annual convention.

Workshops and Festivals

Colleges and universities in Illinois hold summer workshops and offer short courses for teachers. Contact the Speech Communication Department, English Department, Theatre Department, Communications Department, or in some cases, Departments of Education at each campus for further information or contact the Illinois Office of Education for a composite listing.

Illinois High School Theatre Festival

This annual event is cosponsored by the Illinois Office of Education and Illinois Theatre Association. It provides workshops in curricula and production techniques for students and teachers, full-length student productions, short experimental student productions, and special events.